

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7855

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 12284

FOLLOWING REPEAT MADRAS 1504 SENT ACTION NEW DELHI
20 AUG 76.

QUOTE:

MADRAS 1504

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S RULE IN TAMIL NADU: THE FIRST SIX MONTHS
AND THOUGHTS ON THE EXTENSION

1. SUMMARY: THE RAJYA SABHA ON AUGUST 17 EXTENDED PRESIDENT'S RULE IN TAMIL NADU FOR ANOTHER SIX MONTHS. THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF PRESIDENT'S RULE HAVE BROUGHT GREATER DISCIPLINE TO THE STATE, AND MUCH PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN TONING UP THE GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE TO MAKE THE STATE GOVERNMENT MORE EFFICIENT. IN ADDITION WE HAVE BEGUN TO HEAR RUMORS THAT LABOR IS BECOMING SOMEWHAT RESTIVE. THERE IS A GENERAL TENDENCY TO REGARD THE PRESENT STATE ADMINISTRATION AS A GOVERNMENT OF BUREAUCRATS, AND MANY HERE RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR MORE CONTACT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE. ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, PRESIDENT'S RULE HAS NOT RESULTED IN THE ASCENDANCY OF THE CONGRESS (R), AND THE DMK, THE ADMK AND THE CONGRESS (O) CONTINUE VERY MUCH IN EVIDENCE. THE BLOOM APPEARS
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TO BE OFF PRESIDENT'S RULE AND REALISTICALLY SPEAKING IT MUST BE

ADMITTED THAT LITTLE HAS ACTUALLY CHANGED SINCE JANUARY 31, THOUGH IT MAY BE TOO EARLY TO MAKE AN ACCURATE ASSESSMENT OF ITS IMPACT.

END SUMMARY.

2. TO NOBODY'S SURPRISE, THE RAJYA SABHA ON AUGUST 17 APPROVED EXTENSION OF PRESIDENT'S RULE IN TAMIL NADU FOR ANOTHER SIX MONTHS FROM SEPTEMBER 10. PRESIDENT'S RULE IN THE STATE WAS DUE TO EXPIRE SEPTEMBER 9, SINCE THE ORIGINAL PROCLAMATION WAS APPROVED AND SIGNED ON MARCH 10. (IT WILL BE REMEMBERED, HOWEVER, THAT THE PROCLAMATION WAS ORIGINALLY ISSUED ON JANUARY 31.) MOVING THE EXTENSION, HOME MINISTER K. BRAHMANANDA REDDI STATED THAT DROUGHT CONDITIONS IN THE STATE PREVENT THE HOLDING OF ELECTIONS BEFORE SEPTEMBER 9 AND HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT, IN ANY CASE, ADDITIONAL TIME IS NEEDED TO CLEAN UP THE STATE GOVERNMENT.

3. A NUMBER OF UNION AND STATE OFFICIALS HAVE DEFENDED PRESIDENT'S RULE WITHIN THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS, WITH ADVISER TO THE GOVERNOR P. K. DAVE'S SPEECH ON ALL INDIA RADIO ON AUGUST 1 THE MOST NOTABLE EFFORT. DAVE STATED THAT PRESIDENT'S RULE HAD SUCCEEDED "TO SOME EXTENT" IN TONING UP THE STATE ADMINISTRATION, WHICH HAD BEEN THE "FOREMOST TASK" CONFRONTING THE ADVISERS AFTER JANUARY 31, BUT HE ADMITTED THAT THE JOB COULD NOT BE FINISHED "WITHIN SUCH A SHORT TIME." ONE OF THE MAJOR GAINS CITED BY DAVE AS "STRICTER ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAWS AND OBSERVANCE OF ALL ROUND DISCIPLINE." TRANSFERS HAD CONTINUED, HE SAID, WITH 5,210 POLICE OFFICIALS (INCLUDING 40 SUPER-INTENDENTS) TRANSFERRED AND 222 EMPLOYEES (INCLUDING 61 GAZETTED OFFICIALS) COMPULSORILY RETIRED. WHILE DAVE DID NOT HESITATE TO GIVE PRESIDENT'S RULE CREDIT FOR A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, HE ADMITTED, IN EFFECT, THAT MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE. POLITICAL DEFENDERS OF PRESIDENT'S RULE WERE USUALLY LESS CANDID.

4. THERE APPEARS LITTLE DOUBT THAT PRESIDENT'S RULE HAS BROUGHT GREATER DISCIPLINE TO TAMIL NADU, AS DAVE CLAIMED. BUS QUEUES ARE MORE ORDERLY, STREETS ARE CLEANER, STUDENTS ARE LESS RESTLESS, ETC. LABOR HAS BEEN QUIET, THOUGH WE HEAR RUMORS THAT LABOR HERE, AS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, IS GROWING A BIT RESTIVE. ADDITIONALLY, THE BUREAUCRACY APPEARS TO HAVE BENEFITTED FROM THE TONING UP AND SEEMS TO FUNCTION MORE EFFICIENTLY, THOUGH ONE HEARS OCCASIONALLY THAT

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"THINGS TAKE AS LONG OR LONGER THAN THEY DID BEFORE." ONE ALSO HEARS THAT CORRUPTION HAS NOT REALLY BEEN ELIMINATED ENTIRELY, THOUGH THE BIG OPERATORS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN WIPED OUT, OR TO HAVE STOPPED OPERATION. DAVE AND THE OTHER ADVISER, R. V. SUBRAMANIAM, WORK VERY HARD, BUT WE ALSO HEAR INCREASING, THOUGH MUTED, COMPLAINTS THAT TWO MEN SIMPLY CANNOT CARRY THE LOAD THEY ARE EXPECTED TO CARRY. SUBRAMANIAM, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ECONOMIC/DEVELOPMENT AFFAIRS, IS SAID TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT WAS FORMERLY TEN MINIS-

TRIES, AND THOUGHTFUL MADRASIS REALIZE THAT EVEN A MAN AS CAPABLE AS HE CAN NOT DO JUSTICE TO A WORK LOAD OF SUCH MAGNITUDE. IN AN EARLIER SPEECH, DAVE PROMISED SOME DECENTRALIZATION IN THE STATE GOVERNMENT BY GIVING MORE POWER TO HIGHER STATE OFFICIALS - PRESUMABLY

TO EASE SOME OF THE BURDEN ON HIM AND SUBRAMANIAM - BUT WE DO NOT KNOW HOW FAR THIS HAS PROCEEDED.

5. GREATER EMPHASIS IS BEING GIVEN TO THE 20-POINT PROGRAM, AND THE PRESIDENT'S ADMINISTRATION APPEARS TO BE MAKING AN EFFORT TO MAKE UP THE TIME LOST IN IMPLEMENTING IT IN TAMIL NADU. AS IN OTHER STATES, EVIDENCE OF REAL PROGRESS IS HARD TO COME BY, BUT THE EFFORT SEEMS TO BE GENUINE. PERHAPS THE MOST NOTABLE SINGLE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S RULE WAS THE WIPING OUT OF THE DEBT OF THE LOWER CLASSES (MADRAS 1345), THOUGH THIS TOO IS A DOUBLE EDGED KNIFE AND MONEY LENDERS ONCE BURNED, ARE NOT APT TO MAKE MONEY AVAILABLE TO THE

CLASSES WHEN THEY NEED IT. THE COOPERATIVES WILL NOT BE ABLE TO TAKE UP THE SLACK AND IN ANY CASE IT HAS ALREADY BEEN ANNOUNCED THAT THE COOPERATIVES WILL REQUIRE A CO-SIGNER BEFORE THEY LEND MONEY FOR DAY-TO-DAY NEEDS OF THE WEAKER SECTIONS OF THE SOCIETY.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /057 W

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 12284

QUOTE:

MADRAS 1504

6. THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE, MOHANLAL SUKHADIA, HAS MADE A VERY GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION AND OUR PREDICTION THAT HE WOULD BE AN ACTIVIST GOVERNOR IS BEING BORNE OUT. HIS LONG SERVICE AS CHIEF MINISTER OF RAJASTHAN IS CITED AS EVIDENCE OF HIS ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITY, AND IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED HERE THAT THE CENTER MADE A REAL EFFORT TO GIVE THE STATE A GOOD GOVERNOR. PARENTHETICALLY, THE FACT THAT MRS. GANDHI USED SUKHADIA AS AN EMISSARY TO VINOBA BHAVE IS TAKEN LOCALLY AS AN INDICATION OF HIS GOOD STANDING IN DELHI, WHICH LOCAL PEOPLE SEEM TO FEEL BODES WELL FOR TAMIL NADU. DAVE AND SUBRAMANIAM ARE STILL HIGHLY REGARDED PROFESSIONALLY, THOUGH THE LATTER CONTINUES TO BE ACCUSED OF PRO-BHAHMIN BIAS.

7. AS WE HAVE REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, THERE IS A GROWING REALIZATION HERE THAT PRESIDENT'S RULE IS A BUREAUCRATIC ADMINISTRATION WITH LITTLE TOUCH WITH THE COMMON MAN. LOCAL POLITICAL LEADERS CONTINUE TO COMPLAIN THAT THERE IS NO ONE TO WHOM THEY CAN TAKE THEIR GRIEVANCES, THAT THERE IS NO CONTACT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE. THERE ALSO SEEMS TO BE A GROWING REALIZATION THAT GOVERNMENTS CAN NOT REALLY OPERATE WITHOUT SOME POLITICIANS, NO MATTER HOW HARD THE BUREAUCRATS TRY. FOR EXAMPLE, PEOPLE HERE ADMIT THAT THE PRESIDENT'S ADMINISTRATION CAN NOT TAKE DECISIONS ON PURELY POLITICAL ISSUES. TWO RATHER IMPORTANT STATE QUESTIONS- PROHIBITION AND HORSE RACING - ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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APT TO REMAIN ON THE BACK BURNER FOR A LONG TIME, DESPITE THE FACT THAT A MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THEM SETTLED ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. THE ISSUES ARE NOT OF THEMSELVES THAT IMPORTANT, BUT THEY HAVE SERVED TO EMPHASIZE THE POLITICAL IMPOTENCE OF A BUREAUCRATIC ADMINISTRATION. IN ONE CASE WHERE THE ADVISERS TOOK A DECISION TO DE-POLITICIZE AN ISSUE - THE ADMISSION PRODECURE FOR STUDENTS ENTERING ANY PROFESSIONAL COURSE OF STUDY - THE CENTER REVERSED THE ADVISERS AND RE-POLITICIZED IT, TENDING TO UNDERSCORE THE ADVISERS' INABILITY TO HANDLE POLITICAL ISSUES.

8. DESPITE ITS ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE FIRST SIX MONTHS, PRESIDENT'S RULE MUST, IT SEEMS TO US, BE CONSIDERED A FAILURE ON THE POLITICAL FRONT. IF ONE ASSUMES THAT PRESIDENT'S RULE WAS IMPOSED IN LARGE PART TO GET RID OF THE DMK OPPOSITION GOVERNMENT AND, INDEED, THE PARTY ITSELF, AND OPEN THE WAY FOR CONGRESS DOMINATION OF THE STATE, THEN ONE MUST ADMIT THAT PRESIDENT'S RULE HAS NOT BEE A GREAT SUCCESS. DESPITE THE CONTINUOUS VISITS TO THE STATE OF CONGRESS BIG GUNS TRYING TO BREATHE LIFE INTO THE PARTY HERE, THE ORGANIZATION SIMPLY HAS NOT GOTTEN OFF THE GROUND. AT THE SAME TIME, THE DMK HAS REFUSED TO FADE AWAY, THE ADMK CONTINUES TO BE A VIABLE POLITICAL FORCE IN THE STATE, AND THE CONGRESS (O) HAD MAINTAINED ITS SEPARATE IDENHMX Y DESPITE EFFORTS TO EFFECT A MERGER WITH THE CONGRESS (R). EVEN THE MOST ARDENT CONGRESSMEN ADMIT THAT THE CONTRRESS (R) HAS GOTTEN NOWHERE AND THAT ITS ONLY HOPE, SHOULD ELECTIONS BE HELD, WOULD BE AN ALLIANCE WITH THE ADMK AND CPI.

9. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO ASSESS WITH ANY GREAT ACCURACY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRESIDENT'S RULE HERE. MANY OF THOSE WITH WHOM WE COME IN CONTACT REMAIN RELATIVELY APATHETIC ABOUT IT. A LONG PERIOD OF PRESIDENT'S RULE MIGHT WELL HAVE AN ADVERSE AFFECT ON CONGRESS POPULARITY IN THE STATE, SINCE PRESIDENT'S RULE IS ALWAYS CONSIDERED RULE FORM THE CENTER. THIS HAPPENED IN KERALA IN 1957 AND AGAIN IN 1967 AFTER LONG SPELLS OF PRESIDENT'S RULE IN THE STATE, THOUGH THE FACT THAT THE REST OF THE COUNTRY IS UNDER A STATE OF EMERGENCY MIGHT LESSEN CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT'S RULE SOMEWHAT. EARLIER CLAIMS OF THE PRESIDENT'S ADMINISTRATION THAT THE REDUCTION IN FOOD PRICES WAS THE RESULT OF ITS ENDEAVORS HAVE FADED AS PRICES HAVE RISEN DURING THE LEAN SEASON. IN TRUTH, THE STATE ADMINISTRATION HAS ATTEMPTED TO COUNTER PRICE RISES BY PUMPING MORE RICE THROUGH THE PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM, BUT THE FACT REMAINS THAT PRESIDENT'S RULE

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NO LONGER CLAIMS CREDIT FOR WHAT WAS A NATURAL PHENOMENON. IN THE SAME VEIN, A POWER CUT WAS IMPOSED IN MADRAS THIS SUMMER, CONTRARY TO EARLIER CLAIMS THAT THERE WOULD BE NO CUT THIS YEAR, FURTHER UNDERSCORING THE FACT THAT NO MIRACLES CAN BE EXPECTED UNDER PRESIDENT'S RULE.

10. IN CONCLUSION, WE BELIEVE THAT THE BLOOM IS OFF PRESIDENT'S RULE, IAND THDT NOBODY EXPECTS GREAT DEVELOPMENTS OVERNIGHT IN TAMIL NADU. THE STATE ADMINISTRATION MAY HAVE IMPROVED, DISCIPLINE MAY BE BETTER, STRIKES MAY HAVE DISAPPEARED, ETC. BUT IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, NOT MUCH

HAS REALLY CHANGED. THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT IS STILL THE WEATHER, AND A BAD MONSOON CAN UNDO MOST OF THE GOOD ACCOMPLISHED DURING THE PAST SIX MONTHS.

MCCASKILL

UNQUOTE.
SCHNEIDER

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